come great and honourable in theſe latter ages. Methinks I ſee in my mind a noble and puiſſant Nation rouſing herſelf like a ſtrong man after ſleep, and ſhaking her invincible locks: Methinks I ſee her as an Eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unſcaling her long abuſed ſight at the fountain it ſelf of heav'nly radiance; while the whole noiſe of timorous and flocking birds, with thoſe alſo that love the twilight, flutter about, amaz'd at what ſhe means, and in their envious gabble would prognoſticat a year of ſects and ſchiſms.

What ſhould ye doe then, ſhould ye ſuppreſſe all this flowry crop of knowledge and new light ſprung up and yet ſpringing daily in this City, ſhould ye ſet an *Oligarchy* of twenty ingroſſers over it, to bring a famin upon our minds again, when we ſhall know nothing but what is meaſur'd to us by their buſhel? Beleeve it, Lord and Commons, they who counſell ye to ſuch a ſuppreſſing, doe as good as bid ye ſuppreſſe your ſelves; and I will ſoon ſhew how. If it be deſir'd to know the immediat cauſe of all this free writing and free ſpeaking, there cannot be aſſign'd a truer then your own mild, and free, and human government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counſels have purchaſt us, liberty which is the nurſe of all great wits; this is that which hath rarify'd and enlightn'd our ſpirits like the influence of heav'n; this is that which hath enfranchis'd, enlarg'd and lifted up our apprehenſions degrees above themſelves. Ye cannot make us now leſſe capable, leſſe knowing, leſſe eagarly purſuing of the truth, unleſſe ye firſt make your ſelves, that made us ſo, leſſe the lovers, leſſe the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutiſh, formall, and ſlaviſh, as ye found us; but you then muſt firſt become that which ye cannot be, oppreſſive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have free'd us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the ſearch and expectation of greateſt and exacteſt things, is the iſſue of your owne vertu propagated in us; ye cannot ſuppreſſe that unleſſe ye reinforce an abrogated and mercileſſe law, that fathers may diſpatch at will their own children. And who ſhall then ſtick cloſeſt to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up armes for cote and conduct, and his four nobles of Danegelt. Although I diſpraiſe not the defence of juſt immunities, yet love my peace

peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conſcience, above all liberties.

What would be beſt advis'd then, if it be found ſo hurtfull and ſo unequall to ſuppreſſe opinions for the newnes, or the unſutablenes to a cuſtomary acceptance, will not be my task to ſay; I only ſhall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious Lord, who had he not ſacrific'd his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now miſt and bewayl'd a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am ſure; yet I for honours ſake, and may it be eternall to him, ſhall name him, the Lord *Brook*. He writing of Epiſcopacy, and by the way treating of ſects and ſchiſms, left Ye his vote, or rather now the laſt words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honour'd regard with Ye, ſo full of meeknes and breathing charity, that next to his laſt teſtament, who bequeath'd love and peace to his Diſciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peacefull. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility thoſe, however they be miſcall'd, that deſire to live purely, in ſuch a uſe of Gods Ordinances, as the beſt guidance of their conſcience gives them, and to tolerat them, though in ſome diſconformity to our ſelves. The book it ſelf will tell us more at large being publiſht to the world, and dedicated to the Parlament by him who both for his life and for his death deſerves, that what advice he left be not laid by without peruſall.

And now the time in ſpeciall is, by priviledge to write and ſpeak what may help to the furder diſcuſſing of matters in agitation. The Temple of *Janus* with his two *controverſal* faces might now not unſignificantly be ſet open. And though all the windes of doctrin were let looſe to play upon the earth, ſo Truth be in the field, we do injuriouſly by licencing and prohibiting to miſdoubt her ſtrength. Let her and Falſhood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the beſt and ſureſt ſuppreſſing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be ſent down among us, would think of other matters to be conſtituted beyond the diſcipline of *Geneva*, fram'd and fabric't already to our hands. Yet when the

JOHN MILTON *Areopagitica* LONDON, 1644 BRIDWELL LIBRARY Octavo